

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2798

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 4221

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EINV, PINS, VE

SUBJ: FOREIGN OFFICE NOTE ON OWENS-ILLINOIS

REF: CARACAS 4154

1. DCM WAS CALLED INTO FOREIGN MINISTRY THIS AFTERNOON BY VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO RECEIVE NOTE, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND AMBASSADOR BURELLI RIVAS IS DELIVERING IN WASHINGTON. SPANISH TEXT FOLLOWS IN SEPTEL IN THE EVENT IT IS NOT YET AVAILABLE IN THE DEPARTMENT.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR AND VICE MINISTER WITH DCM MADE MUCH OF THE FACT THAT IT WAS THE DCM BEING CALLED IN ORDER NOT TO EXACERBATE THE ISSUE. THE VICE MINISTER STATED THAT THE NOTE HAD BEEN CLEARED WITH THE PRESIDENT WHO HAD MADE SOME CHANGES IN THE ORIGINAL DRAFT. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE NOTE WOULD NOT BE PUBLISHED AND THAT NO PRESS STATEMENT WOULD BE MADE ON THIS SUBJECT. IT WAS HIS POINT THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER THE NOTE "INFORMATIONAL" IN NATURE, "AN EXPLANATION OF THE POSITION OF THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT." HE WAS STILL HOPEFUL, HE SAID, THAT SOME FELICITOUS ARRANGEMENT COULD BE ACHIEVED THAT WOULD RESOLVE THIS ISSUE.

3. THE DCM POINTED OUT THAT THE NOTE SOUNDED PRETTY TOUGH TO BE CONSIDERED "INFORMATIONAL". WHEN THE VICE MINISTER REFERRED

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TO THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN'S REMARKS ON THE SUBJECT OF OWENS-

ILLINOIS, IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR'S ORIGINAL PRESS RELEASE WAS ABIT OF A SURPRISE ALSO AND THAT THE GOV SPOKESMAN HAD RESPONDED TO THE DEPARTMENT'S REMARKS PUBLICLY.

4. COMMENT: IN OUR VIEW, THE HARD TONE OF NOTE HARDLY QUALIFIES AS "INFORMATIONAL". IN ADDITION, THE AMBASSADOR PLANS TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER OUR REJECTION OF THE ASSERTION THAT THE REASONED RESPONSE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN TO AN OBVIOUS QUESTION CONSTITUTES ANY KIND OF INTERVENTION INTO THE AFFAIRS OF VENEZUELA.
SHLAUDEMAM

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